

Bell

SOVIET HANDLING OF THE BERLIN PROBLEM

The Problem

In November 1958 the USSR declared Western rights in Berlin null and void and demanded that the West negotiate a new "free city" status for West Berlin; otherwise the USSR would transfer all of its responsibilities regarding Berlin to the GDR and the West would have to deal with the latter on such matters. What explanations can be given for the Soviet failure to carry out this threat to date? What evidence is there to support these conclusions? And what can the West do to deter the USSR from unacceptable unilateral steps against Berlin in the future?

I. DETERRENTS TO UNILATERAL ACTION IN THE PASTConclusions

First, Moscow's elaborate efforts to set the stage for negotiations on Berlin and its willingness at times to await propitious circumstances for negotiations indicate that (quite apart from the question of risk) the Soviets have believed greater gains could be achieved through a negotiated four-power agreement than through forcing the West to accommodate itself to unilateral action. The Soviets have evidently believed this to be true even of relatively limited negotiated settlements, provided the door were left open for later communist initiative.

Second, the Soviets have been aware of the potential military risks involved in confronting the West with a fait accompli on the access routes to Berlin. While the Soviets have repeatedly stated and probably believed that the West would not wage general war over the supervision of Allied access, there probably has been enough doubt in their minds to arouse concern that the situation might get out of hand following the transfer of access controls.

Neither of these two major deterrents has been absolute. On the one hand, the Soviets have always had the option of attempting to force a negotiated four-power settlement by provoking a crisis (i.e., by proceeding to the brink of decisive unilateral action). On the other hand, the Soviets have probably seen a number of reasons for confidence in being able to avoid undue risks of general war — local military superiority, a growing strategic deterrent, an ability to control the form of the overt challenge in such a way (e.g., document control by the GDR) as to weaken Western rationale for the use of force, the equivocal position of the UK. But, taken together, these deterring factors have evidently convinced the Soviets that it would be more profitable and prudent to explore fully the possibility of non-crisis negotiations before forcing a confrontation over Berlin.

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The record also suggests that, at the time he launched his Berlin demands, Khrushchev underestimated Western reluctance to negotiate a new status for West Berlin.

Third, the Soviets have evidently believed that a crisis approach to a Berlin "solution" might incur political liabilities for the USSR — by galvanizing the West into a more unified, stronger overall posture and by undercutting the Soviet "peace" posture in the neutralist countries of Asia and Africa.

Finally, personalities and special circumstances have probably contributed to Soviet go-slow tactics.

Evidence

There is no particular document or Soviet statement which gives a direct and comprehensive explanation of why the USSR has not acted unilaterally on Berlin to date. We do not have, for example, any authoritative document or set of documents on this subject as those which have provided such an illuminating insight into the Sino-Soviet dispute. (The Berlin and German question is only discussed tangentially in the Sino-Soviet documents.)

An answer can be deduced, however, from the general manner in which the Soviets have handled the Berlin question over the past two and one-half years. From the record of negotiations, postponed deadlines, conversations, and speeches, we are able to identify certain characteristic features of Soviet behavior which are pertinent to the question.

Emphasis on Negotiations. At the time Khrushchev launched his Berlin demands in November 1958, he had three alternative approaches open to him.

First, after a pro forma nod in the direction of negotiations, the Soviets could have presented the Western allies with a fait accompli by transferring access controls to the East Germans. The aim would be to enhance the GDR's international status and gradually erode the West's position in Berlin by inducing or forcing the Western allies to deal with the East Germans on access problems.

Second, the Soviets could have sought to achieve a negotiated four-power agreement on Berlin by first provoking a crisis.

Finally, the Soviets could have sought an agreement through ostensibly amicable negotiations brought about by the threat of unilateral action, a threat exercised not so boldly as to jeopardize the possibility of non-crisis negotiations but boldly enough to bring the Western powers to the conference table.

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The USSR has followed this third approach throughout the entire period since November 1958. Only a month after Khrushchev announced the six-month deadline, the Soviets began to play down this ultimative feature of their Berlin demands when the December 16-18 NATO conference in effect signalled Western willingness to negotiate on Germany and Berlin so long as no ultimatum was attached. Once negotiations were underway in Geneva, Moscow allowed the May 27 deadline to pass without a murmur.

The second major Soviet step delaying action on its Berlin threat occurred in early August 1959 when Moscow in effect agreed to adjourn the Geneva conference in exchange for Khrushchev's visit to the US. This decision is explained in large part by Khrushchev's long-standing desire to visit the US. But it also evidenced — paradoxically enough — Moscow's desire to achieve an agreement on Berlin and the two Germanies through negotiations. The Geneva conference gave no sign of an early agreement on Soviet terms. Under the circumstances Khrushchev probably felt that he could afford to wait for another round of negotiations and probably was confident he could obtain agreement to such negotiations on more favorable terms — namely, at the summit. In any event, this is how he acted.

During the remainder of 1959, the Soviets showed considerable patience in making final arrangements for a summit conference. They did very little by way of prodding the Western allies, and readily assented to the West's proposal (drawn up to meet De Gaulle's wishes) to meet in May, after Khrushchev's visit to France. Evidently Moscow felt that it was more important to be assured of negotiations under optimum conditions (or so a summit conference seemed to them at the time) than to attempt to force an early conference.

Once formal agreement was reached in December on holding the Paris conference, Moscow stepped up its warnings of the consequences of failure to reach agreement on Berlin and the two Germanies. This action was partly an effort to improve the Soviet bargaining position in advance of the conference, and partly a response to statements by the Western powers that they did not intend to yield on Berlin.

The most striking example of Soviet attachment to non-crisis negotiations as the preferred method of "solving" the Berlin problem occurred at the time of the Paris conference. While no Soviet deadline was operative at the time, Moscow sought to create the impression that no "progress" on Berlin at the conference would result in a separate treaty; and if ever there was no progress at an international conference, it was at Paris. Yet Khrushchev almost immediately signalled his intention to take no unilateral action on Berlin until negotiations could be arranged with the new US President, in "six to eight months." (Presumably in order to maintain the credibility of their threat, the Soviets stubbornly maintained that the Paris conference had never been convened.)

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Finally, in accompaniment to Moscow's efforts in recent months to set the stage for a new conference on Berlin and the two Germanies, there was a rather steady slippage of the Soviet-set schedule for negotiations and deadline for action. Following Paris, Khrushchev stated that summit negotiations must be held within six to eight months (i.e., November to January); on October 20, he publicly stated that the question of a German peace treaty "must apparently be settled in 1961." In private talks last fall with Prime Minister Macmillan and FRG Ambassador Kroll, he took the line that negotiations should be held in February/March or the spring of 1961; early this year East German leaders publicly called for a spring summit conference. Later, Khrushchev persisted in the line that a conference could not be delayed until after the West German elections (in September) or the Soviet Communist Party Congress (in October). Then in his April 24 talk with Kroll, Khrushchev hinted that a conference could be held after the Party Congress. He also indicated that the USSR would wait until early 1962 to sign a separate peace treaty, if no negotiations eventuate, in contrast to his previous insistence that something would have to be done by the end of 1961 (whether a separate treaty, an agreement, a conference, or an agreement to hold a conference has not been quite clear).

It should not be inferred from this hesitation on timing that Khrushchev does not intend to try to push the West into a negotiated solution on Berlin at an early date. This record does indicate, however, that Moscow would strongly prefer a negotiated "settlement" to one which might arise out of unilateral action and, being aware of the difficulty of bringing the West to the conference table on Berlin, has been careful to avoid launching a new conference drive prematurely. Indeed, the difficulty of conducting a campaign for ostensibly amicable high-level negotiations at a time when tensions were high over Laos and Cuba was probably a major reason for Khrushchev's vacillation on the matter over the past several months.

This predilection for negotiations indicates that the Soviets have believed greater gains could be had through a negotiated four-power settlement than through forcing the West to accommodate itself to unilateral action. Western agreement to change the status of West Berlin and voluntary recognition of the existence of two German states would quite obviously have more far-reaching implications than Western acceptance of GDR controllers on the check-points. The Soviets have evidently believed this to be true even of relatively limited negotiated settlements, provided they left the door open for some later communist initiative.

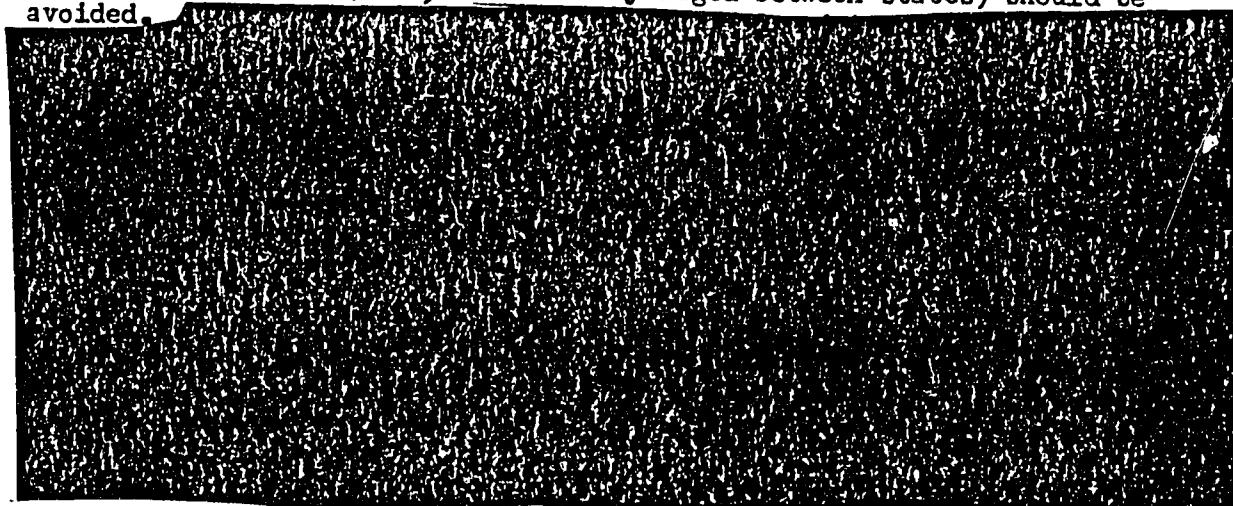
Khrushchev on Risks of War. Khrushchev's hesitation in pressing the Berlin issue to a crisis situation has also been importantly affected by his appreciation of the military risks involved, even though it is doubtful that his concern on this score has been sufficient, by itself, to deter him from unilateral action.

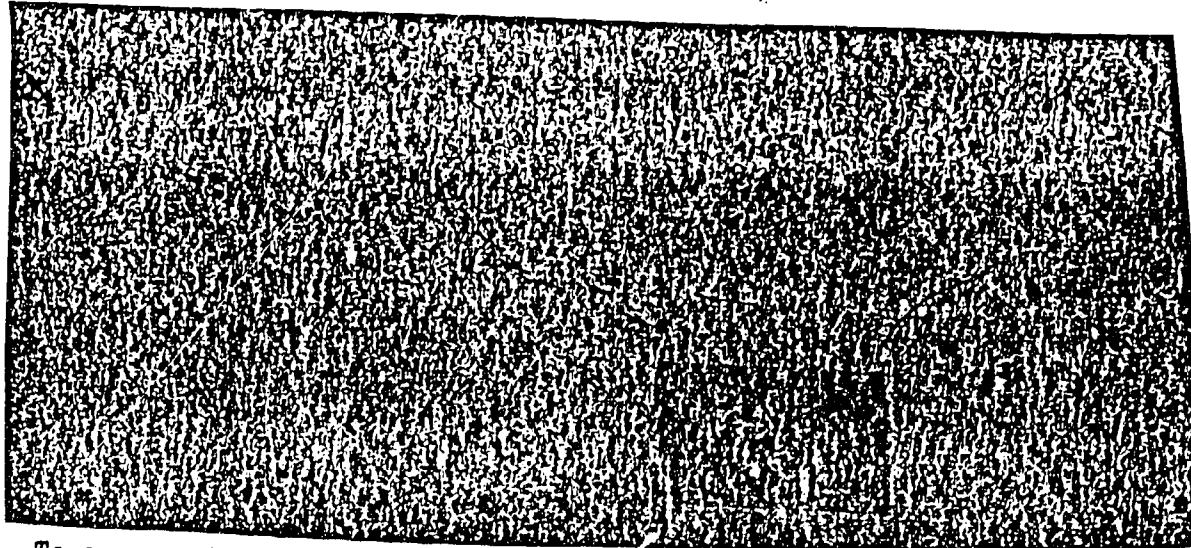
In speeches and private talks since November 1958, Khrushchev has consistently plugged the same line in discussing the use of force over Berlin. He has said over and over again that he was convinced the West would not go to war over Berlin; but that if the West attempted to defy GDR access controls by force, the USSR would meet force with force, in defense of its ally, the GDR.

While much of this has been stated for effect, Khrushchev has probably seen a number of reasons for confidence in being able to avoid undue risks of general war. First, the Soviet probably believe that they would have considerable leeway in playing their hand, even after the conclusion of a separate treaty. But even if a direct confrontation occurred, it goes without saying that the Soviets would be confident of their local military superiority in the face of a land probe by Western forces. In addition, the USSR's growing strategic deterrent, the sense of vulnerability this has generated in Western Europe, the UK's equivocal stance, and Soviet ability to control the form of the overt challenge in such a way (e.g., document control by the GDR) as to weaken Western rationale for the use of force have all been cited, and probably are accepted, by Khrushchev as reasons for believing that the West would not be prepared to run grave risks of general war over this issue.

Still, Khrushchev has communicated, in indirect fashion, a concern that unilateral action could produce a situation which might get out of hand — through escalation, miscalculation, or over commitment — and lead to a disastrous war no one wanted. This is evident in the gradual and "peaceful" manner in which the Soviets have posed their Berlin challenge, in Soviet maneuverings for negotiations, and in Khrushchev's acknowledgement that the West's prestige is heavily committed on the Berlin question.

This is also evident in Khrushchev's general philosophy regarding the use of war as an instrument of policy in the nuclear age. While vowing continued Soviet approval and support of "national liberation wars," Khrushchev has consistently maintained that not only general nuclear war but also local wars (i.e., wars overtly waged between states) should be avoided.





To sum up, Khrushchev has no intention of provoking a war over Berlin, but believes that the USSR's local and strategic power can induce the West to yield positions peacefully, preferably through negotiations. He also believes that the West would not be prepared to wage a general war over Berlin, at least not in response to the type of challenge the Soviets would pose as a consequence of a separate peace treaty. Still, unilateral Soviet action could create a situation not fully predictable, in which a miscalculated move could involve the USSR in a disastrous nuclear war. It is probably this area of doubt that has contributed to Khrushchev's evident reluctance to conclude a separate treaty.

Peaceful Cloak for Berlin Demands. A major feature of Moscow's offensive on Berlin has been to depict the Soviet position in as peaceful and reasonable light as possible. The proposal to convert West Berlin into a "free city" has from the beginning been portrayed as a compromise, as all of Berlin is claimed as rightfully belonging to the GDR. The two Germanies peace treaty proposal, to which the Berlin scheme has been linked, is presented as a reasonable move designed to eliminate the remnants of World War II, ratify the "existing" situation in Central Europe, and do away with hot-beds of war (occupation of Berlin, West German demands for border revisions).

Moreover, the threat to unilaterally abrogate occupation rights in Berlin is consistently depicted as a peaceful act. This is one of the reasons why the Soviets altered their original "free city" proposal by linking it to a German peace treaty; a separate peace treaty would provide a cloak of legality for transferring controls over Allied access to

the East Germans.^{1/} The Soviets continuously deny that there would be an attempt to blockade Berlin; they claim that all the Allies would be required to do in the event of a separate treaty would be to make arrangements with the sovereign GDR authorities on access to Berlin. Under these circumstances -- Khrushchev has frequently stressed in private talks -- the West would be cast in the role of aggressor if it attempted to circumvent GDR authority by use of force, and the USSR would then be compelled to defend the GDR against this aggression.

By taking this approach, the Soviets quite obviously have sought to strengthen their hand at the conference table and to make it more difficult for the West to oppose possible unilateral action regarding Berlin. But this "peaceful" approach also reflects an appreciation on Moscow's part of its vulnerabilities if it forcefully presses its Berlin demands; apart from the desire to limit the risks of war in such event, the Soviets probably have had some concern that an overly aggressive public posture on the Berlin issue could undercut their "peace" posture in the neutralist countries of Asia and Africa, counter their efforts (in the post Camp David period) toward a limited detente with the West, and galvanize the West into a stronger, more unified stance.

These have been additional arguments, from the Soviet viewpoint, for seeking a negotiated settlement. In fact, they epitomize Khrushchev's general foreign policy strategy which envisages two broad lines of Soviet advance: (1) "peaceful coexistence" with the West, based on Western acceptance of the status quo (Soviet style) in Eastern Europe, gains achieved through negotiations backed by Soviet pressure and strength, accommodation in certain other spheres of East-West relations, reduced pressures for high arms expenditures, and avoidance of nuclear war; and (2) expansion of Soviet influence in the underdeveloped areas, brought about by tactical collaboration with nationalist forces, broad economic ties and political cooperation where possible with neutralist governments, and exploitation of suitable opportunities for communist subversion.

Personalities and Special Circumstances. There is some evidence that Khrushchev regarded President Eisenhower and Prime Minister Macmillan as relatively "soft touches" at the conference table (relatively so in com-

1. In its notes of November 27, 1958 setting forth the "free city" proposal, Moscow claimed that the Allies' violation of the Potsdam Agreement had rendered their rights in Berlin null and void, and threatened transfer of access controls if "an adequate agreement" were not reached in six months. By March the following year, the Soviets had specifically reaffirmed the continuing validity of Allied rights in Berlin but claimed that a peace treaty with the two Germanies, or with one of them (i.e., the GDR) would nullify these rights.

parison with his chief advisors, in the case of the President, relatively so in comparison with other Western leaders, in the case of the Prime Minister). If Khrushchev was indeed of this opinion, this is one reason why he was willing to adjourn the Geneva conference and wait, rather patiently, for nine months until a summit conference was held.

There is no evidence to support the argument that Khrushchev has deliberately held off pressing his Berlin demands until the military power balance changed more in the favor of the USSR. As indicated above, we believe that has been due to Khrushchev's desire to choose a propitious time for negotiations, and to other factors. However, it seems safe to assume that the USSR's growing acquisition of a strategic strike force has done nothing to detract from Soviet decisions to act later rather than sooner.

A Khrushchev Miscalculation? While not a deterring factor in itself, it is worthwhile noting that at the time he launched his Berlin demands, Khrushchev probably underestimated somewhat Western unwillingness to negotiate a new status for West Berlin. This is indicated by the Soviet record on negotiations, discussed above. Also, on the occasion of several private talks, Khrushchev and other Soviet leaders seemed to express genuine surprise that the West did not accept "free city" status for West Berlin as the best way out of a difficult situation.

To the extent that this is true, and to the extent to which he has publicly committed himself in the bloc and elsewhere to "solving" the Berlin problem, it is correct to say that Khrushchev has overcommitted himself on the question.

II. POSSIBLE DETERRENTS TO UNILATERAL ACTION IN THE FUTURE

Before exploring this question, it is essential to assess briefly Soviet objectives and intentions.

Soviet Objectives

The record of the past 30 months, in particular the negotiations at the 1959 Geneva conference, gives clear evidence as to Moscow's major objective. It is, to consolidate communist rule in East Germany -- and, by extension, in all of Eastern Europe -- by: (1) containing and eventually eliminating the disruptive influence of a free, West Berlin; and/or (2) confirming the final division of Germany and enhancing the international status of the East German regime. This has been reflected in one way or another in all Soviet proposals -- Moscow's maximum proposal for a two Germanies peace treaty and, on this basis, a West Berlin "free city"; its fallback proposals for a separate "free city" agreement (June 1, 1959 protocol), for an "interim" Berlin agreement (June 10, June 19, and July 28, 1959, May 9, 1960), and for "interim" All-German talks (June 4, 1961).

In addition, the Soviets would hope for an agreement on Berlin and the two Germanies that would seriously weaken NATO by calling in question the West's determination to live up to its commitments. The Soviets probably regard this aim as a by-product, however, as they cannot be sure that, in pressing their demands, they would not strengthen NATO in the final analysis.

To date, the USSR has made no real effort to utilize its Berlin threat as a bargaining device for checking West German rearmament or for other objectives. Indeed, the Soviets from the very beginning have been careful to avoid accepting any link between disarmament and Berlin, obviously being aware of the possibility for almost endless procrastination in disarmament negotiations.

It is true that the USSR's draft peace treaty of January 10, 1959 would provide for the virtual neutralization and demilitarization of West Germany. However, it is extremely doubtful that the Soviets have ever regarded this draft -- in its present form -- as a serious negotiating proposal; the unilateral action which they threaten -- transfer of access controls to the East Germans -- would be far less onerous to the West than the provisions of the draft treaty (demilitarization of West Germany, acceptance of the "two Germanies" thesis, conversion of West Berlin into a "free city").

Intentions

There can be no doubt that a "solution" of the Berlin and German question is a primary objective of Soviet foreign policy and that this question will play a dominant role in Soviet diplomacy over the next six months.

In the first instance, the stakes are high, from the Soviet view as well as ours. The consolidation of the "status quo" in Eastern Europe -- perhaps the primary overall Soviet policy objective -- can never be fully assured until the East German regime is established as a viable and accepted international entity. And communist rule in East Germany cannot be fully consolidated until there is an end to hopes for unification, until the West recognizes the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the "second" German state in the East, and until the disruptive influence of West Berlin is at least neutralized.

Secondly, Khrushchev probably feels that he has a strong bargaining position, despite his probable recognition that he initially overestimated the ease of his task.

Finally, the USSR and Khrushchev personally are heavily committed to some early "progress" on this question.

These basic considerations should, however, be viewed in perspective. We have seen above that the Soviets have repeatedly ignored their deadline, once they receive some satisfaction on holding negotiations; while the Soviets are no closer to their goals in East Germany and Eastern Europe than they were in 1958, their situation there is not materially more pressing now than it was then. A second point to bear in mind is Moscow's gradual, step-by-step approach to a final "solution" of the "problems" of West Berlin and the two Germanies. We still believe this to be true, despite the preemtory line of the USSR's June 4 aide memoire which in proposing an interim agreement offers the West nothing more than an agreement to conclude a two Germanies peace treaty in six months thereafter. It is well to recall that this is an initial negotiating position, one that is much softer than the initial Soviet position at the 1959 conference and of about the same degree of toughness -- on balance -- as the May 9, 1960 proposal tabled before the Paris conference. Also, the thrust of East German pronouncements over the past several months has been to disabuse the SED party faithful of hopes for a quick, decisive solution of the Berlin and German problems.

The immediate Soviet aim is to get an early Western commitment to hold negotiations on a two Germanies treaty and Berlin. At the moment, the USSR is striving for this objective not by an open diplomatic campaign for renewed negotiations but by attempting to create the presumption that a separate treaty is inevitable by the end of the year -- unless the West negotiates. By this tactic -- somewhat similar to that of 1958-59 -- Moscow evidently hopes to put the West in the role of supplicant and thus strengthen the Soviet bargaining position.

If negotiations eventuate, the Soviets would probably first table for the record their maximum demand -- a two Germanies peace treaty and, on this basis, conversion of West Berlin into a "free city." This would not be a serious negotiating position, however, for the reasons stated above. The Soviets would, therefore, quickly proceed to one or several "fallback" proposals. The most likely candidates are the following, all of which are on record:^{1/}

- (1) An agreement on a West Berlin "free city" separate from any peace treaty considerations (June 1, 1959 protocol);
- (2) An "interim" agreement on West Berlin, coupled with all-German talks (memoranda of May 9, 1960 and July 28, 1959);

1. Other possibilities would include a new, truncated version of the two Germanies peace treaty proposal. The Soviets have hinted at a peace treaty limited to provisions for (1) ending the state of war, (2) recognizing existing German borders (and states), and (3) establishing a new status for West Berlin. They might even limit the threathy draft to the first two provisions, with the proviso that the status of West Berlin would be unchanged for a stipulated period of time pending agreement on a new status.

(3) An "interim" agreement providing for all-German talks (memorandum of June 4, 1961).

The Soviets would regard any or all of these fallbacks as initial positions subject to negotiation and further modification.

Western Moves to Deter Unilateral Soviet Action

Before discussing these moves, it is necessary to stress that there are several types of unilateral bloc actions which we might choose to regard as unacceptable and hence select as that which we sought to forestall. Such action might be defined as the mere conclusion of a separate treaty and unilateral declaration of the abrogation of occupation rights in Berlin, or the transfer to the GDR of jurisdictional controls over Allied access to Berlin, or the physical obstruction of Allied (or West German) traffic to Berlin. The existence of these several possibilities necessarily places this discussion on a fairly general plane.

There are, broadly speaking, three courses of action open to the West. These are considered here strictly from the point of view of likely Soviet reaction, without regard to their acceptability as policies.

A. Negotiation of New Status for Berlin. The Soviets almost certainly would not accept a "free city" arrangement or some other new, contractual status for all Berlin (unless the agreement provided for virtual GDR control of the city, or, as part of a package deal, some other concession highly favorable to the communists and most likely unacceptable to the West). The Soviets have consistently rejected such proposals when suggested in the past. Such an agreement with proper safeguards would run counter to the Soviet's major objective -- consolidating the GDR regime -- in raising the Berlin issue.

If the West were willing to negotiate a new status for West Berlin replacing occupation rights there, the Soviets would be willing -- as they have frequently stated -- to consider some modifications in their standing proposal for a separate agreement on a West Berlin "free city." For example, they might agree to a more precise UN "guarantee." However, they would be unlikely under present circumstances to agree to provisions which denied GDR authority over access routes, which prevented the GDR from checking the flow of refugees to the FRG through West Berlin (the communists include this process among the "activities" constituting interference in the GDR), or which tied the communists' hands in putting the squeeze on the "free city" administration at some later date.

In initially implementing a free city agreement on West Berlin of the sort likely to be acceptable to the Soviets, the GDR would probably (1) insist on complete control over all access routes, including air routes;

(2) attempt to utilize this control to engage the West in de facto dealings and to prevent the movement of refugees to the FRG through West Berlin (they are now flown out), intending in this fashion to solve largely the refugee problem; (3) insist on the severance of quasi juridical ties between the FRG and West Berlin and the abolition of West Berlin political organizations hostile to the GDR; and (4), of course, the abolition of Allied installations (except for "symbolic" troop contingents). Otherwise, the communists would probably be quite "correct" at first in living up to the terms of an independent and neutral West Berlin. It would only be a matter of time, however, before the GDR and the USSR attempted to bring stronger pressures to bear on the internal politics of the free city on the pretext that these politics constituted interference in the internal affairs of the GDR.

While hailing the free city agreement as a step paving the way toward "normalizing" East-West relations, the USSR would simultaneously cite the agreement as evidence that the shift in the balance of power in the bloc's favor was compelling the West to yield positions without a struggle. Indeed, in the context of the West's position on Berlin over the past 30 months, the Soviets would almost certainly believe this analysis and might well be encouraged, accordingly, to embark on new ventures.

The Soviets have never given any indication of what they would do in regard to a peace treaty if a separate agreement were reached on establishing a West Berlin "free city." In all likelihood, they would proceed, after a time, to sign a unilateral treaty with the GDR, hoping thereby to establish a firmer juridical basis for their claims regarding the division of Germany into two states and the permanence of present borders. Under these circumstances, a separate treaty would have no practical effect insofar as Berlin was concerned.

B. Negotiation of Interim Agreement on Berlin or Peace Treaty. The Soviet interest in a limited or "interim" agreement of one sort or another is a matter of record. We do not believe the Soviets would accept a limited agreement which would preclude their taking further action on the Berlin and two Germanies questions; in other words, they would reject an agreement on which would confirm Berlin's present status for an indefinite period of time (e.g., until reunification) or would undercut the two Germanies thesis (e.g., would affirm the West's position that a peace treaty can only be signed with a unified Germany);

However, the Soviets demonstrated at the Geneva conference that they would accept an "interim" agreement which left open the question of what would happen after the period of the agreement lapsed. (Their intention was still, however, to create the impression that further steps should follow.) Moreover, there already have been some indications that the USSR would accept less -- perhaps considerably so -- in the way of an interim agreement than their last position at the Geneva conference. Toward the end of the conference, Gromyko indicated that the USSR would drop the provision for all-German talks in exchange for the West's agreement to a troop

reduction in West Berlin. At the abortive Paris conference, the Soviets tabled, as an initial proposal, an interim agreement rather than their maximum peace treaty plan, which was their initial proposal at Geneva. The same is true of the June 4 memorandum. In addition, the Soviets' gradual approach over the past two years indicates less confidence in their position than prior to the Geneva conference.

This evidence and Moscow's obvious preference for negotiated agreements indicates that the Soviets might be willing in the final analysis to settle for a limited agreement of relatively little substantive significance, provided that prior Western actions had convinced them that unilateral action would incur such political liabilities and military risks that it was not worth the candle. The West would have to weigh the disadvantage of a possible renewal of Soviet pressures at a later date against the more immediate risks it might run if the Soviets concluded a separate treaty. But if it is true that Khrushchev believes that he has overcommitted himself --- and this belief would certainly be enhanced by the stipulated Western actions --- then he might be satisfied with an agreement which he could cite as "progress" but which would not be overly prejudicial to Western interests.

C. Limitation of Separate Treaty Consequences. Under this course of action, the West would be prepared to face the consequences of a separate peace treaty (presumably concluded by the bloc after unsuccessful negotiations had taken place) but would attempt to keep communist implementation of the treaty within acceptable limits by impressing the USSR that obstruction of Berlin traffic would bring it high risks and liabilities.

The communists would have a wide range of choices in deciding how to implement a separate treaty. Their stated position, and most likely initial course, is that there would be no blockade of traffic to Berlin (no simultaneous obstruction of West German traffic) but that the three Western allies would have to negotiate arrangements with the East Germans governing the passage of Allied land and air traffic through GDR checkpoints. (For the Allies, this would mean about the same degree of de facto dealings with the GDR regime as are presently conducted by the FRG, but, in the case of GDR control of air traffic, would also mean a check on the flow of refugees from West Berlin to the FRG.) However, at one extreme, the GDR might merely insist on "controlling" Allied travel documents on surface routes; or the Soviets might even defer for a set period the transfer of access controls by including, in the separate treaty, a proviso along the lines of the Bolz-Zorin agreement. At the other extreme, the communists might maintain that the continued presence of Allied forces in West Berlin was illegal and use this argument to attempt to impose a full blockade until a new status for West Berlin could be negotiated.

Quite clearly, the extent to which the communists would attempt to extort concessions from the West by manipulating the question of access controls would depend on their estimate of the political and military risks involved. Given their likely initial demands, it seems possible that

the West could keep this extortion within tolerable limits, provided that the Allies were prepared to engage in de facto dealings with the GDR and provided that Western actions persuaded the communists of the inadvisability of proceeding too far.

This course of action, like the others, would have drawbacks. With the passage of time there would inevitably be slippage in the Western position regarding the limit on dealings with the East Germans; we would have to be prepared to go farther than we do now in de facto acknowledgement of the GDR state. We also would have to be prepared to face a serious crisis if there was miscalculation of the political intentions of either side. But it is entirely possible that the West would have to pay a smaller price in this instance than under the terms of any four-power agreement the Soviets are likely to accept. This hypothesis can only be tested in the course of future negotiations.

What Can Be Done

Courses "B" and "C" are not mutually exclusive. One is, in a sense, a fallback position to the other. And both would require the same Western actions designed to persuade the Soviets that to proceed too far would be to their disadvantage.

Military Risks. There obviously is a wide range of possible actions in the military field which we might undertake in attempting to deter unilateral Soviet action. This paper is not the appropriate vehicle for examining in detail the likely effect of these various possibilities. We therefore limit ourselves to setting forth certain general criteria which are likely to enhance the credibility of preparedness moves and statements.

First, mere declarations of intent to run high military risks in support of Allied rights in Berlin would not be enough. Some preparatory actions would have to be taken to lend substance to these words and, to be effective, would have to be taken prior to the time negotiations took place, or, as the case may be, prior to the turnover of access controls. However, the scale of these preparatory moves would have to be properly timed in keeping with prevailing circumstances. In particular, prematurely large-scale overt moves taken prior to negotiations could produce adverse results by circumscribing Soviet maneuverability in negotiations and by producing disunity among the Western powers (which in turn might lead the Soviets to believe they really had less to fear in the way of a strong and united Western response). They would also tend to undercut the political deterrents we would hope to maximize.

Second, in attempting to convince the Soviets of the military risks involved in pressing their Berlin demands, we should avoid taking a position that is so rigid that it is unconvincing, or so unrealistic it might have to be abandoned. For example, it is highly doubtful the USSR

will ever be convinced that the West would wage war over the issue of GDR examination of travel documents, or mere conclusion of a separate treaty. Our threats to resort to force if necessary, in order to maintain our rights should, as a rule, be kept general. When it is desirable to be specific, these threats should be related to an appropriately direct challenge by the other side.

Third, Allied disunity will undermine the effectiveness of almost any Western statements or actions designed to deter the Soviets through raising fears of war; indeed, disunity would be an added incentive for the Soviets to press harder. For this reason alone, it would seem highly desirable to achieve a concerted Western position at an early date, even if this meant an accommodation to UK and French views on contingency planning.

Political Liabilities. In private conversations and (as appropriate) in public statements and actions, we should impress upon the Soviets that, regardless of the risks of war involved, pressure on Berlin will inevitably raise cold war tensions, lead to greatly increased defense expenditures in the West, tighten the NATO alliance, and might cause us to reexamine our policies regarding the dissemination of nuclear weapons to our allies. We might also take the line (in private talks only) that heretofore we have been relatively restrained in regard to the USSR's difficulties in Eastern Europe, but that we may have to reexamine this policy in the light of Berlin developments.

It is doubtful the Soviet leaders would see their interests served by provoking a crisis over Berlin if they believed that the crisis would be prolonged with the consequences outlined above and were not sure of obtaining a clear-cut gain on the Berlin and German questions. The consequences would run counter to several important Soviet foreign policy aims and would produce new strains in the Soviet economy by forcing it to meet the challenge of a stepped-up arms race. Of course it would be difficult to convince the Soviets a crisis over Berlin would necessarily have these consequences, but we could raise enough concern in their minds to have a measurable effect on their actions.

Equally important, we should attempt to maximize in advance the political costs of forceful action on Berlin and Germany to the Soviet position. in the new countries of Asia and Africa. Recognizing the virtual inevitability of new negotiations and recognizing the emotional appeal of national self-determination in the new countries, it might be advisable for the West to take the initiative in proposing new negotiations, emphasizing the positive goal of self-determination and the West's willingness to make all reasonable efforts to meet the aspirations of the German people for unification. In particular, we might consider (a) drawing up and publicizing before negotiations a new peace plan which would be much simpler, more flexible and artful in its propaganda appeal; (b) drawing up and publicizing before hand a new first-step proposal for unifying all Berlin; (c) a propaganda campaign showing that the Soviet two Germanies position is designed

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to divide further East and West and prevent self-determination in Germany; (d) assiduous circularizing of all of the above views and proposals in the new countries; (e) seeking UN affirmation of the goal of German unity and endorsement of a referendum in all Germany and all Berlin on this issue.

Other than agreeing to negotiate, it is highly unlikely that Moscow would accept these proposals. However, a pre-negotiations diplomatic campaign along these lines would enable the West to profit politically from its main asset in Germany, namely, the German people's opposition to communism, which compels the communists to take a stand against the popular concepts of national unity and self-determination.

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